

Sudan – South Sudan Relations Analysis: October 31, 2012 – November 13, 2012

The Joint Political and Security Mechanism, and Outstanding Issues

Jonathan Rozen



Sudan South Sudan Border Buffer Zone

The Joint Political and Security Mechanism held from November 6-8, co-chaired by Sudan Defense Minister Abdel Rahim Hussein and his South Sudan counterpart John Kong, brought agreement on the operationalisation of the demilitarized buffer zone along the Sudan-South Sudan border and a reaffirmation of their commitment to the Addis Ababa Agreement.¹

The two states agreed to joint border monitoring teams along the whole of the border; a progressive step that will resume trade and resource flow.² While Kong described the meeting as “fruitful”, distinct issues remain, namely the Abyei region and the SPLM-N insurgency in Sudan.³

The SPLM-N has welcomed the deal but also reaffirm their claim to control over 40% of the border.⁴ If the buffer zone is to hold, the SPLM-N will undeniably be a key actor.

¹ "South Sudan army vows readiness to pull back from buffer zone." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44449> (accessed November 28, 2012).

² United Nations Security Council, "Security Council Authorizes Six-month Mandate Extension Of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei." Last modified November 16, 2012. Accessed November 28, 2012. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10818.doc.htm>.

"South Sudan army vows readiness to pull back from buffer zone." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44449> (accessed November 28, 2012).

³ "South Sudan army vows readiness to pull back from buffer zone." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44449> (accessed November 28, 2012).

⁴ "South Sudan army vows readiness to pull back from buffer zone." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44449> (accessed November 28, 2012).

Conflict Between Sudan and the SPLM-N

The issue of the SPLM-N insurgency remains a key point of friction for the two states.

At present, the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N remain steadfast to their opposing positions. The SPLM-N continues to call for the removal of the Bashir regime and the implementation of a secular democratic government.⁵ In response, Sudan refers to the SPLM-N as armed insurgents.⁶ Both the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the African Union (AU) have called for talks between the two sides. However, these talks have been stalled as the Sudanese government refuses to negotiate with a militarized faction that is not deemed a legitimate political party.⁷ Furthermore, the Sudanese government rejected a deal signed by presidential assistant Nafie Ali Nafie, recognizing SPLM-N as a political party.⁸ Sudanese officials continue to accuse South Sudan of supporting the SPLM-N, while South Sudan continues to deny these allegations but has affirmed their sympathy with the insurgent's plight.⁹ In the discussions preparing for the joint security meetings, Juba refused to include the issue of the SPLM-N.¹⁰ Closed door meetings have failed to produce any progress on the issue.¹¹

The future of the border security and greater cooperation will need to include the SPLM-N. As a source of conflict and general hostility between Khartoum and Juba, talks between Sudan and the SPLM-N are an important step.

Furthermore, as the conflict continues in the north, refugees continue to flow south. Currently over 175,000 refugees have fled to South Sudan and the number is expected to increase by over 1000 people per week.¹² The conflict between SPLM-N and Sudan is increasingly becoming a more imposing south of the border.

The Abyei Region

The Abyei referendum is another source of tension between the two Sudanese states. While the Mbeki initiative indicates that only Dinka Ngok and Misseriya tribesmen may vote, Khartoum insists that the nomadic Misseriya herdsmen, who spend a

⁵ "SPLM-N's Arman calls on Sudanese to not pay attention to Bashir's disease." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 10, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44487> (accessed November 28, 2012).

⁶ "Sudan's NCP reiterates need to implement security arrangements." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 11, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44507> (accessed November 28, 2012).

⁷ "Sudan's NCP reiterates need to implement security arrangements." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 11, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44507> (accessed November 28, 2012).

⁸ "Sudan's NCP reiterates need to implement security arrangements." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 11, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44507> (accessed November 28, 2012).

⁹ Refer to September/October Sudan-South Sudan Relations Analysis.

"South Sudan army vows readiness to pull back from buffer zone." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44449> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁰ "South Sudan army vows readiness to pull back from buffer zone." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44449> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹¹ "South Sudan army vows readiness to pull back from buffer zone." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44449> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹² <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211170296.html>

significant time outside the Abyei region, should be included.¹³ It is expected that the Dinka Ngok majority will vote in favour of South Sudan.¹⁴ The Mbeki initiative and the issue of the Misseriya herdsman will likely force Khartoum to appeal directly to UNSC members for support, particularly China and Russia.¹⁵

In the interim, a temporary administration is being constructed to govern the Abyei region. On November 9th, President Kiir gave permission for the key speaker to be Sudanese; a “painful” move, but one that gives South Sudan the higher moral ground and sends a clear message of compliance with the African Union Peace and Security Council.¹⁶ Luka Biong Deng, Co-Chair of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, referred to the new body as “just an interim arrangement to facilitate conduct of the referendum which is [Juba’s] strategic objective. We need to seal off delaying tactics of the government of Khartoum”.¹⁷

Despite Bashir’s remaining assertion that Abyei is rightfully Sudan’s, it appears as though the region will eventually fall to South Sudan due to the 1956 colonial borderline.¹⁸ It is important for Juba to remain in compliance with the regional and global community to avoid adverse action from Russia or China. Nonetheless, a polarization of the UNSC could make the referendum more complicated than expected.

Oil

Oil remains a vital link between Sudan and South Sudan. Despite their outstanding issues, the economic incentive of oil revenue continues to drive cooperation.

Since the halting of South Sudan oil production as a result of hiked Sudan transit fees, facilities have been declared operational.¹⁹ The importance of this symbiotic relationship cannot be understated. The relation, by which Sudan transports its land locked neighbor’s resource, offers a unique point of mutual benefit. With its limited

¹³ "Sudan/South Sudan Dialogue with Mbeki and Abyei Mission Renewal." *Whats In The Blue*, sec. News, November 13, 2012. <http://www.whatsinblue.org/2012/11/sudansouth-sudan-dialogue-with-mbeki-and-abyei-mission-renewal.php>.

"Sudan urges UNSC to reconsider Abyei draft text while criticizing AU." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 13, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44528> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁴ "Sudan urges UNSC to reconsider Abyei draft text while criticizing AU." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 13, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44528> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁵ "Sudan urges UNSC to reconsider Abyei draft text while criticizing AU." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 13, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44528> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁶ "South Sudan concedes position of Abyei Legislative Council speaker to Sudan." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 9, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44482> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁷ "South Sudan concedes position of Abyei Legislative Council speaker to Sudan." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 9, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44482> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁸ "South Sudan concedes position of Abyei Legislative Council speaker to Sudan." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 9, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44482> (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁹ "Unity Deputy Governor: state oil infrastructure near serviceable." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44447> (accessed November 28, 2012).

infrastructure, South Sudan's dire need for further development is completely reliant on oil revenue, which make up 98% of its income.²⁰

Serving as a point of tension as well as a mediator, this lucrative relationship is important in building a positive connection between the new neighbors. Vice-president Al-Haj Adam Youssef, head of NCP's political sector, has stated, "It is incredible that the oil passes through Sudanese territory to feed the treasury of a nation supporting the insurgency and armed movements," adding, "the two countries should start by the full implementation of security provisions."²¹ The importance of oil revenue is a central point for both state's to develop a mutually beneficial future. It is important to recognize that the oil and SPLM-N issues are integrally linked and do effect each other. Progress on oil relations may have the potential to develop into progress on conflict resolution in the border region of Sudan.

Despite these possibilities, Sudan has successfully sought economic relations with China and has begun numerous oil drilling initiatives.²² As a move to decrease reliance on South Sudan or as a political move to increase a UNSC member's investment in the current regime, the increased relations with China is definitely a strategic move as the international community becomes more involved in the Sudan-South Sudan relations.

General Analysis

Sudan and South Sudan's mixed relationship has become increasingly productive. As the Addis Ababa Agreement solidifies, open war between the two states becomes less of a reality. This is not to say that issues of hostility do not exist.

The inclusion of the SPLM-N is undeniably a vital component in complete normalization of relations. With control over 40% of the border region, their inclusion in both general security talks and negotiations with the Sudan government are important. Dissipating Sudanese anxiety over Juba's alleged support for the insurgent group as well as the maintenance of security in the buffer zone will hinge on this inclusion.

The Abyei region also remains as a flash point for the two states. Sudanese rhetoric appears to defy international and regional opinion on how the region should be decided. Khartoum will continue to assert the inclusion of Misseriya herdsman in the referendum and seek support from China and Russia. On this issue, oil developments may construct the relationship Sudan seeks with China, creating divisions within the UNSC and perhaps a more long-term issue with the Abyei referendum.

There is an interconnected relationship between oil relations, the SPLM-N insurgents and UNSC members' involvement on the Abyei region. Regardless of the outstanding complexity of the issues, oil production and transportation are important

²⁰ "Unity Deputy Governor: state oil infrastructure near serviceable." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 7, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44447> (accessed November 28, 2012).

²¹ "Sudan's NCP reiterates need to implement security arrangements." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 11, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44507> (accessed November 28, 2012).

²² "China, Sudan agree to increase oil production – officials." *Sudan Tribune*, sec. News, November 11, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44494> (accessed November 28, 2012).

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channels for increased cooperation and realization of mutual goals. The maintenance of these mutual goals is vital to lasting and progressive peace.